

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2746

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 0836

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GY, NS

SUBJECT: GUYANA-SURINAM RELATIONS: VISIT OF SURINAMESE

CABINET MEMBER EDDIE BRUMA

REF: A) PARAMARIBO 337, B) PARAMARIBO 338, C) PARAMARIBO 340

1. SUMMARY: BRUMA MET WITH GOG CABINET MINISTERS DURING VISIT TO GEORGETOWN APRIL 26-27. GOG FONMIN SAID BRUMA EXPOUNDED "HARD LINE" IN REGARD TO SURINAM'S RELATIONS WITH GUYANA WHILE PROFESSING TO BE PRAGMATIC SOCIALIST ON DOMESTIC POLICY. DISCUSSION LEFT WELLS DISTURBED REGARDING SURINAM'S POTENTIAL FOR TROUBLE GROWING OUT OF ITS APPARENT CLOSE RELATIONS WITH BRAZIL, VENEZUELA AND FRANCE. END SUMMARY.

2. WHEN I SAW FONMIN WILLS APRIL 28, I ASKED HIM WHAT HAD COME DURING TALKS WITH BRUMA, SINCE HE HAD MENTIONED BRUMA'S VISIT TO ME EARLIER. BRUMA ATTENDED CARIBBEAN REGIONAL LABOR SEMINAR THIS WEEK. HE SAID BRUMA, ACCOMPANIED BY CYRIL CARL, HAD LONG DISCUSSION OVER DINNER WITH MINISTER OF ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES HUBERT JACK, MINISTER OF ECON DEVELOPMENT DESMOND HOYTE AND HIMSELF.

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3. WILLS SAID HE RAISED THE QUESTION OF THE NEW RIVER TRIANGLE TERRITORIAL DISPUTE AND SUGGESTED THAT SURINAM AND GUYANA APPLY THE SAME PRINCIPLE AS IN THE CASE OF THE VENEZUELAN DISPUTE, I.E. THAT THE TWO COUNTRIES AGREE FIRST TO ESTABLISH FRAMEWORK OF BROAD COOPERATION AND WITHIN THAT FRAMEWORK EVENTUALLY COME TO GRIPS WITH HOW TO SETTLE THE TERRITORIAL PROBLEM. ACCORDING TO WILLS, BRUMA SAID HE THOUGHT BETTER FORMULA WAS TO SETTLE TERRITORIAL DISPUTE FIRST AND THEN THERE WOULD BE A FIRM BASIS FOR COOPERATION. WHEN WILLS INTERPOSED THAT BRUMA'S FORMULA WOULD ALLOW CAPITALIST COUNTRIES OPPORTUNITY TO SPLIT THE TWO SOCIALIST REGIMES, BRUMA REJOINED THAT THE SAME WOULD APPLY UNDER WILLS SUGGESTED FORMULA.

4. WILLS SAID HE ASKED BRUMA WHY SURINAM IS SHOPPING FOR ARMS IN BRAZIL AND VENEZUELA. BRUMA SAID SURINAM FEELS THREATENED, BUT WOULD NOT SPECIFY SOURCE OF THREAT. WILLS TOOK THIS TO MEAN SURINAM REGARDS GUYANA AS A THREAT.

5. BRUMA SPENT SOME TIME DESCRIBING IN GLOWING TERMS THE RAPID AND FAVORABLE EVOLUTION OF SURINAM'S RELATIONS WITH BOTH BRAZIL AND VENEZUELA. BRUMA INDICATED BOTH COUNTRIES WERE OFFERING SUBSTANTIAL ECONOMIC AND TRADE CONCESSIONS TO SURINAM. HE SAID, HOWEVER, SURINAM WAS WARY OF BECOMING POLITICALLY INVOLVED WITH EITHER COUNTRY AND NOTED THAT PM ARRON HAD PUT OFF INVITATION TO MAKE EARLY STATE VISIT TO BRAZIL. WILLS COMMENTED IN REGARD TO LATTER POINT THAT BOTH ARRON AND BRAZILIAN PRESIDENT GEISEL WOULD BE IN EUROPE AT SAME TIME DURING MAY AND HE TOOK IT FOR GRANTED THAT A MEETING BETWEEN THE TWO WOULD BE ARRANGED SOME PLACE IN EUROPE. WILLS SAID HE ASKED WHY SURINAM HAD NOT ESTABLISHED A RESIDENT EMBASSY IN GEORGETOWN WHILE GUYANESE HAD LONG SINCE SET UP A MISSION IN PARAMARIBO. HE SAID BRUMA'S ALLEGATION OF FINANCIAL STRINGENCIES WAS NOT CONVINCING.

6. TO WILL'S INQUIRY REGARDING SURINAM'S RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORING FRENCH GUIANA, BRUMA REPORTEDLY TOLD HIM THAT THE GOS HAD REACHED AN UNDERSTANDING WITH THE FRENCH GOVT ON THEIR BORDER DISPUTE AND THAT THE FRENCH ARE NOW OFFERING TO MAKE SUBSTANTIAL INVESTMENTS IN SURINAM. WILLS SAID HE DID NOT FEEL HE GOT A VERY SATISFACTORY ANSWER TO HIS QUESTION WHY THE GOS WAS SETTING UP TWO NEW LARGE REFINERIES BUT THAT HE COULDN'T COMPLAIN TOO MUCH BECAUSE SURINAM HAD AGREED TO TURN OVER TO GUYANA THEIR 1976 SUGAR EXPORT QUOTA
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ACCORDED SURINAM UNDER THE LOME AGREEMENT WITH THE EEC, SINCE SURINAM PRODUCTION WOULD NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO ALLOW FOR EXPORT YET. WILLS ALSO SAID HE ALLUDED TO REPORTS OF NUMEROUS VISITS BY FOREIGN LEGIONNAIRES FROM FRENCH GUIANA TO SURINAM AND IN THAT CONNECTION SAID THAT BRUMA DUCKED ANSWERING HIS QUESTION AS TO WHETHER THERE WAS ANY PRESENT OR PROSPECTIVE MILITARY ACCORD BETWEEN SURINAM AND FRENCH GUIANA.

7. WILLS SAID HE HAD ASKED BRUMA HOW SURINAM WOULD ALIGN ITSELF IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS. BRUMA TOLD HIM SURINAM EXPECTED TO JOIN THE GROUP OF 77 AND NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT BUT WAS NOT AS MUCH INTERESTED IN JOINING CARICOM AS OAS.

8. WITH REGARD TO CUBAN DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION IN SURINAM, WILLS SAID HE DID NOT RAISE THIS SUBJECT WITH BRUMA BUT THAT HE SUSPECTED THE SURINAMESE MAY HAVE TOLD CUBAN AMBASSADOR TO GUYANA MARTINEZ IN NOVEMBER THAT THEY WOULD PREFER TO DELAY FOR AWHILE HAVING RESIDENT CUBAN MISSION. WILLS BELIEVES THIS WOULD BE CONSONANT WITH HIS ASSESSMENT THAT GOS IS PUTTING FIRST PRIORITY ON DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE RELATIONS WITH BRAZIL AND VENEZUELA.

9. COMMENT: FROM STANDPOINT OF WILLS AND BURNHAM'S PERCEPTION OF DANGER FROM SURINAM'S RELATIONS WITH BRAZIL, HAVING ARRON'S OFFICIAL VISIT TO BRAZIL OUT IN OPEN MAY HAVE SLIGHT ANALGESIC EFFECT, BUT NOT MUCH. OVERALL EFFECT OF BRUMA'S VISIT WAS IN OPPOSITE DIRECTION, AND IT OCCURS TO US THAT BRUMA MAY HAVE DONE THIS DELIBERATELY TO SERVE SOME ULTERIOR DOMESTIC PURPOSE, E.G. KEEP SURINAM-GUYANA RELATIONS STIRRED UP TO EXTENT IT APPEARS ARRON IS INEPT IN DIPLOMATIC DEALINGS. AS DEPARTMENT AND EMBASSY PARAMARIBO CAN SEE, IT DOESN'T TAKE MUCH FUEL TO STOKES FIRES OF GOG SUSPICIONS THESE DAYS.

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